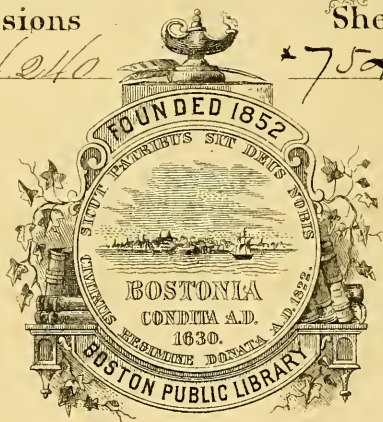


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## LETTER FROM REV. JOEL MANN. 7

Since a part of the Review in the foregoing pages has been published, a Letter from Rev. Joel Mann has appeared in the New York "Independent" of May 16th. It is a document which sufficiently explains itself. And it is thought to be so timely and so valuable, that we wish to give it a circulation, as far as we can, in connection with the Review, which it so entirely confirms. Upon some points, the testimony of Mr. Mann will be found to be of very special interest. We cannot but indulge the hope, that *the truth of facts* will eventually prevail.

[From the New York "Independent."]

MESSRS. EDITORS,—Being at the house of a clergyman a few days since, I took up your paper, and seeing an article headed, *The Salem Case again*, I read it, not so much with surprise, as regret, for I have lived long enough to learn not to be very much surprised with any thing. The writer of the article is Mr. Wilder, the present pastor of the Howard Street Church. Alluding to something published over the signature of "Thurloe," he says, "Permit me to do what for want of the proper knowledge of the facts, Thurloe could not do—state the facts in the case." Would that the said pastor had performed what he undertook, and had stated "the truth, *the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*" The failure to do this, has made the following statement and correction necessary.

I was installed pastor of that Church May 6th, 1840, and continued its pastor seven years, lacking about a month. After a while, difficulties arose connected with ultra-Abolitionism, Second Adventism, Millerism, and Perfectionism, which sentiments a portion of the members embraced and maintained, I doubt not, conscientiously; but which myself and the majority of the Church did not embrace nor approve. The pleasant harmony with which we had been favored vanished, and with it our encouraging prosperity. One hundred dollars was deducted from my salary, and then one-third of the whole, so that it then paid about one-half of my current expenses. Grieved and worn out with the difficulties, and seeing no prospect of a favorable change, I requested a dissolution of the pastoral relation, though I should have been willing to have remained with them, making great pecuniary sacrifices, if they had been united.

The Church met to act on my request, which being assented to, we proceeded to appoint and convoke a Council. I stated to the Church that the usual mode of proceeding was for the pastor to choose one-half, and the Church the other half, but that I was willing that they should choose the

whole. It was concluded to invite the Congregational Churches of the city, and those near us in the immediate vicinity, making twelve in all. A few individuals insisted that there should be one or more Churches at a distance, which, as alleged, would be favorable to their particular views. More than once, I expressed a willingness that they should be gratified. The Church voted by a large majority to invite the twelve neighboring Churches. With what propriety, then, can Mr. Wilder, the present pastor, say of those individuals, "They had no voice in calling that Council"? Has a minority no voice, unless they can have every thing in their own way, and in opposition to the will of the majority?

He next states, that this Council "Voted to advise the dismissal of the pastor." Just the reverse of this was the fact. After having "voted unanimously" that so far as any thing had appeared before the Council, the character of the pastor is "unimpeached and unimpeachable," it was "Voted that it is *not* expedient that the pastoral relation between the Rev. Joel Mann and the Howard Street Church be dissolved." These are quotations from the Result.

The tissue of misrepresentation which follows this is astonishing, considering that Mr. Wilder had undertaken to "state the facts of the case." After saying that the pastor continued to supply the pulpit for two or three weeks, he adds, "On one of these Sabbath evenings, some of the Church who acted with the majority, met at the house of the pastor, and consulted respecting the project of dissolving the Church. It is said that the brethren concluded that it was expedient. One dissented." I am here represented as plotting with others for the dissolution of the Church. It is an unkind aspersion, and sadly at variance with the fact. There never was a meeting held in my house, nor, to my knowledge, any where else, to consult for such a purpose. That Church had been very dear to my heart, and I had labored to the utmost of my ability and strength to build it up; many precious converts had been added to it; I had wept and prayed much over its dissensions, and had expended a large amount from my own resources, exclusive of what I received as salary, to sustain myself in these efforts for its prosperity. It was a painful thing to me to separate from a people I had loved; and before I moved at all in that matter, I invited a number of brethren to my house to ascertain whether measures would be taken as the gospel directs to remove difficulties, and thus *save the Church*; and I was then assured that nothing could be done. This was three months before the *calling* of the first Council, and this caused me to make up my mind to request a dismissal.

So far as I have any knowledge of the matter, the project for a dissolution of the Church originated in the private deliberations of the first Council, being suggested by the exigencies of the case. So I was informed by a lay member sometime afterward. The wise and good brethren perceived that the chasm which separated the members of the Church was so deep and wide, that they could not be brought to harmonize in one body, and discipline could not be exercised. So they state it in their final result. The dissolution was no project of mine; nor did I ever advise a single member of the Council to that measure. During the interval between the two Coun-



cils, which was about eight weeks, a part of which time I spent in Rhode Island, I was careful to avoid conversation on that subject with neighboring ministers and church-members; and I challenge the strictest scrutiny in this matter. True it was, that I could not see, nor could any body see, how the members of that Church could ever walk together again without a vast change in their *sentiments and feelings*. In private conversation with a few individuals after the calling of the second Council, I did say, that "I should not be surprised, if a dissolution of the Church should be recommended." This remark was based wholly on the fact, that such a measure had been proposed by an influential member in the first Council, and was discussed, and approved by a number, whom, and how many, I have never known. The above remark, I presume, is what Mr. Wilder has to rest his assertion upon, that "the pastor was heard to say that it would be dissolved."

Finding on my return home, that nothing had been done to settle difficulties, I renewed my request for a dismissal, and the calling of the second Council. The Church met, and agreed that it was not necessary to invite the whole twelve Churches, as there would probably be little to be done but to grant the dismissal, all the difficulties having been so thoroughly examined by the former Council. It was agreed, therefore, as had been customary in my experience in such cases, to reduce the number. Those invited were, however, *the very same* as belonged to the first Council, and who, of course, *knew the whole state of affairs*. When the question was made, how shall we proceed to appoint the Council, the Church wished me to nominate. I declined, and again expressed my willingness to leave the choice to them. They insisted that I should nominate, which I did, and they did the same, and the election was made accordingly, as I believe, without dissent. But Mr. Wilder intimates that this Council was made up of new members, who had little or no knowledge of the state of affairs; whereas, they were the same pastors, and so far as I know, the same delegates, as had spent two and a half days, and by adjournment, another half day, on this identical subject. He says reproachfully, "That Council was in session less than four hours, and yet they dismissed the pastor, advised the dissolution of the Church," &c. Is this consistent with an honest purpose to "state the facts of the case"?

What Mr. Wilder says about "leaving out some men—who had become odious to the pastor, and B. and his party in the Church," does not indicate very satisfactorily, a candid state of mind. The reason for leaving out is given above. Those he calls "his party" were a large majority of the truly excellent and money-paying members.

Passing over other things I would notice Mr. Wilder's assertion, that this "small Council" which was in session only "three or four hours" "was in the highest sense *ex parte*." The manner of appointing that Council, as stated above, by the pastor and the Church, acting in concert and mutually, shows how entirely untrue that assertion is, who, and what was the party on that occasion.

As wanting in truth is the next assertion, viz: "They had not the condition of the Church before them in any proper sense." And yet those six pastors, with their delegates, had, only eight weeks previously, spent three

days in patient, careful, exhausting examination of the whole matter!! But this is in keeping with much that has been said relative to those discreditable difficulties.

"The people will of course judge," but if they knew the facts as I know them, they would judge very differently from what Mr. Wilder would have them.

He informs the public, that the so-called Howard Street Church now has peace and harmony. This is a reason for thankfulness; and it shows that the Council acted wisely in advising a dissolution of the Church. Peace they could not have had without that measure. It has been dearly bought; may they long enjoy it.

Yours, &c.,

JOEL MANN.

*Kingston, R. I., April 25, 1850.*





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